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FM AMEMBASSY BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN 000173

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EAP/MTS

SINGAPORE FOR DAO

DEFENSE FOR OSD/POLICY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/30/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [BX](#)

SUBJECT: BRUNEI SEEKS MEASURED ENHANCEMENT OF DEFENSE
RELATIONSHIP

REF: A. BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN 131

[1](#)B. BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN 156

Classified By: CDA Justin Friedman, reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

SUMMARY

[11.](#) (C) At Ambassador Skodon's final farewell call, Deputy Minister of Defense Pehin Yasmin Umar suggested some targets for enhancing the bilateral defense relationship to go along with the growing mil-mil relationship as the Government of Brunei (GoB) signaled in reftels, including: signing an Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement (ACSA), posting a Defense Attaché in Washington, DC by 2010, and finding a U.S. think tank to partner with the Ministry of Defense's own think tank. He also will ask for follow on support to help his Ministry make better use of the Force Oriented Cost Information System (FOCIS) provided by the USG. Yasmin also told us that Brunei was negotiating a status of forces agreement with the Philippines, in part to allow Brunei to operate independently from other monitoring teams should the Malaysians pull out of the Mindanao monitoring mission. END SUMMARY.

NEXT STEPS IN DEFENSE COOPERATION

[12.](#) (C) Deputy Minister of Defense Pehin Yasmin Umar and Chief of Defense Pehin Major General Halbi hosted the Ambassador, DCM (now Charge) and Pol/Mil Assistant at a farewell lunch May 20. Yasmin told us that the GoB legal review of the Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement (ACSA) was nearly completed and responded positively when the Ambassador suggested that Pehin Halbi and Admiral Keating could target signing the ACSA at their next meeting. Yasmin said that he would like to enhance the defense and mil-mil relationship by posting a Defense Attaché to the Brunei Embassy in Washington, DC. Yasmin also would like to have the MinDef-sponsored think tank, the Institute of Defense and Strategic Studies, establish a relationship with a U.S. think tank to bring more U.S. speakers to participate in Brunei strategic issues for.

[13.](#) (C) Pehin Halbi said that Brunei was looking for just the right candidate to put forward as a nominee for the U.S. Naval Academy. Yasmin and Halbi said that they understood only the best could compete for entry into Annapolis, and MinDef would want to follow the model they set with the current West Point and new Air Force Academy cadets and find

the best person possible. Yasmin added that once funding issues are clarified, the GoB would assign an education liaison officer to its Washington mission to support the growing number of MinDef-sponsored scholarship students as well as do the ground work for more general scholarship students to attend U.S. universities.

FOCIS HAS HELPED

¶4. (C) Yasmin thanked us for bringing the FOCIS defense cost modeling system to Brunei. He said that the system had been very helpful in developing the current fiscal year budget. However, normal staff rotations had left MinDef with few users familiar with how to run the model. We suggested that if current staff could not train their replacements we would forward a request back to Washington for follow on training.

SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING MINDANAO EXPANSION

¶5. (C) Commenting on the recent visit of senior defense officials from the Philippines, Pehin Yasmin said that the GoB was seriously considering expanding its staff assigned to the International Monitoring Team (IMT) on Mindanao. He said that MinDef was negotiating a status of forces agreement with the Philippines to facilitate this, as well as to lay the basis for further joint military activities with the Philippines, regardless of whether Malaysia pulls out of the IMT.

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